

# The Business Monthly

The Business Newspaper of Howard & Anne Arundel Counties and BWI Business District

## How Much is Your Blog Worth?

By Patricia Redsicker and Duane Carey



A lot of people were caught by surprise on Superbowl weekend when AOL announced their acquisition of the Huffington Post for 315 million dollars - five times its 65 million dollar annual revenues!

AOL (a lagging company trying to re-invent itself) and HuffPo (the most distinctive name in electronic content) have as much in common as Michael Moore and the Tea Party. So it's with good reason that observers were scratching their heads wondering, "What just happened?"

But we learned something significant that week.

Digital content is an asset of exceptionally high value. It wasn't too long ago when jaws dropped at the thought that Facebook could be valued at a billion dollars. Today it is valued at \$50 billion and is likely to continue rising according to the New York Times.

Huffington Post for example gets 25 million unique visitors PER DAY. They have 6000 talented and unpaid

bloggers (including previous distinguished bloggers such as President Obama, Hillary Clinton, Diane Sawyer and a list of celebrities and political heavy-weights).

How does this shape the way we think about corporate blogs? A corporate blog provides a forum for your company's leaders and employees to discuss topics of interest with target prospects, customers, and industry influencers. It embodies the idea of content and community – that valuable content attracts and retains a community of brand-enthusiasts, prospects, and customers.

A blog consists of many different posts written by different bloggers within the company. That means that the largest amount of original content resides in a corporate blog and is the single most important digital asset that an organization owns.

Corporate blogs also contribute immensely to organic search engine optimization (SEO) and social media strategies because the search engines are biased toward dynamic, rather than static content. Blogs also help SEO and social media because both efforts require resourceful, relevant, and consistent content. The more blog content you create the higher the chances of attracting new visitors to your website.

With the right kind of content your organization can establish itself as an authority in a particular subject matter and build a dominant online reputation. Moreover, engaging content attracts new readers and gradually builds a community that is passionate about your company, its people, and its products.

How can my organization create a valuable blog?

### Start blogging

If you haven't started, start blogging. It's not too late to start building a stockpile of digital content. Become a valuable resource for your customers by providing information that will help them solve their problems.

In addition to being resourceful, your blog content will contain key words that your targets are likely to enter into the Google search function. Search engines love blogs because they provide fresh content with keyword rich link bait that allows your organization to be found easily on search results and facilitates in-bound links from third-party sources.

Engage your personnel. Many of them will be intimidated and refuse to participate, some will be thrilled with the assignment, and the vast middle will be willing, but seeking lots of

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direction. Try to do as much of it in-house as possible, but there are plenty of great resources for outsourcing the writing. An editorial calendar is a useful tool to help bring clarity and purpose to your content strategy, and help your staff be more efficient. By planning your topics ahead of time you can experience an easier and more successful content creation process.

## Repurpose existing material

As any marketer will tell you the process of creating new and original content is expensive and time consuming. But there is no need to re-invent the wheel. Your organization has already produced remarkable content that is currently stored in e-files, training material, case-studies, white papers, industry reports and other resourceful information. Use existing material to brainstorm ideas for future blog articles.

## Deliver valuable content on a consistent basis

Make a commitment to blog consistently – whether it's once or twice a week. The most common mistake is to avoid creating blog content altogether because of lim-

ited time or resources. Start with whatever resources you have and commit to a regular schedule.

## Use blog content to interact with your community

Blogging facilitates the kind of customer-responsiveness that you're not likely to find on any other platform. Monitor the feedback that you get from comments on your blog (and social media channels) and respond to questions and concerns that your readers may have. Use interesting comments to start a whole new conversation (article).

Remember that blogs are a powerful way to interact with prospects and influence their perception of your brand. For example [www.manofthehouse.com](http://www.manofthehouse.com) a thriving blog created by Proctor & Gamble targets a very specific audience – dads. The blog is designed specifically for men and covers many interesting topics from money, career and gadgets, to fitness, relationships, clothes, parenting, and home-repair. They've done a remarkable job of initiating 'sticky' conversations that engage prospects and result in very high conversion rates.

All this to say that the potential value of your blog is a function of many factors such as time, consistency, perceived value of content, size of audience, interaction with established bloggers, and appeal to advertisers and investors.

Although your blog's monetary value is currently unknown, understand that it has a future potential that is immeasurable. If you're actively blogging then you're creating content that will bring value to your organization in the long run.

If you haven't fully leveraged the power of corporate blogs, you're not alone. Most organizations are now just getting started. Your challenge as a decision-maker is to implement a blogging strategy that will create a destination place for smart content and a vibrant community.

Anyone can have a successful blog and the only barriers are personal ones.

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*Patricia Redsicker is Manager of Content & Social Media at IMPACT Marketing & Public Relations, and a contributor to the Content Marketing Institute. Duane Carey is an award-winning copywriter and president of IMPACT.*